The nomads Mewu

do not go beyond Ho-chou, Ning-hou and T'ao-chou to trade, but they do undertake longer journeys to famous places of pilgrimage. Some time in their lives most of them go to Kum-bum, more often to Labrang. Small groups of four or five tent nomads occasionally also go on pilgrimages to the large sacred cities of Inner Tibet, Lhasa and Shigatse. /38/

In the summer of 1936 all the Mewu-Fantzu undertook the two-to-three-days' pilgrimage to Labrang in order to see the Panchan-Lama, the spiritual head of the Lamaists, who happened to be there at the time. Individual tent nomads also accompany lamas and Living Buddhas on journeys into Inner Tibet.

Formal education is unknown among the tent nomads. The lamas alone are educated and versed in purely scholastic Tibetan knowledge. Only those laymen can read who were once lamas themselves, but for some reason laid aside the spiritual garb. All contracts and agreements are verbal.

The language of the tent nomads is the northeast Tibetan dialect of the former Tibetan province of Amdo. Some tent nomads speak a little Chinese, which they learn from Chinese and Mohammedan traders, with whom they do business. In counting and calculating they often use their rosaries; as yet they do not use the Chinese abacus. If they have complicated transactions, they seek help from a lama. They do not use special measuring rods. Cloth is measured in squares, the side of a square being equal to the width of the cloth strip. They have no particular square measure for their pastureland; hills, roads and brooks are their only boundaries. They measure oat fields in terms of a "day's work," i.e. the surface which can be ploughed in one day with one yak. Their unit of weight is the Chinese chin (pound) at 32 /sic/ liang (ounces). They try to approximate the weight determined by Chinese officials in He-tso. Sliding weights are measured with simple Chinese hand-scales and a stone. Capacity measures, like the Chinese tou (bushel), are not used because there are no products traded in this way.

The Mewu-Fantzu have adopted the Chinese calendar. (1) However, they do not themselves buy the Chinese calendar books; the scholarly lamas figure out the Chinese calendar for the people and /39/ post it on the temple gate, so that everyone will know whether

1. as have the Tibetans in general, Cf. Wadell 7), page 451.

177 the month is long or short and on which days the 24 chieh-ch'i occur,
805 that is, the dates according to which the weather predictions are
796 made. The Fantzu do not celebrate any Chinese calendar day except New Year. Not everybody knows when his birthday is or how old he is. They celebrate only the birthday of a Living Buddha, which coincides with the date of death of his previous incarnation.

532 The lay Mewu-Fantzu carry on art of any kind as little as they
341 do education. The arts of architecture, painting and sculpture are
79- practiced exclusively by the lamas. Only laymen who were once lamas may possibly engage in an art, for example, painting.

306 Although the tent nomads are very fond of ornaments, all their jewelry, except what comes from Inner Tibet, is made by Chinese and Mohammedans, albeit in strict Tibetan style. Nor do the women engage in any kind of artistic handwork, as for example embroidery.

533 It is different with music. The nomads cultivate simple folk music as well as religious music. Their only musical instrument is the flute, which is made of brass or of the wing bones of the vulture. Both men and women play the flute. They play mostly in spring, in the second and third months, in their tents, out on the pasture and along the road. Special occasions for music-making are New Year and family festivals, where there is much drinking and courtship. They enjoy singing, and do a great deal of it, particularly the young men and girls, without instrumental accompaniment. They have drinking songs, shepherd songs, love songs sung on the mountains, and a New Year's song. Once I also heard a monotonous work song sung by women who were washing fleece. Most of the songs are sung in alternating parts for boys and girls. The melodies are reminiscent of melancholy /40/ Russian folk tunes, sometimes also Alpine yodels. I succeeded in noting down the following songs which were sung in the mountains in alternating parts between boys and girls:

I.
1. Do not go away.
2. When you return I'll tell you something nice.

II.
1. When you look up, you see mountains, and beyond the mountains there is a river.
2. Even though corals and pearls look like stones, they are as dear as gold and silver.
3. Even though my friend is Chinese, he is of royal blood.